

Original empirical article

ATTITUDES OF VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS TOWARD ADVERTISING THROUGH SPORT AT METU

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Abstract. *The aim of this study was to investigate the consequences and impacts of advertising through sport on the attitudes of university stakeholders at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. The data was collected from randomly selected 173 university stakeholders. According to Pyun (2006), the questionnaire was composed of 45 items regarding attitudes and beliefs and six demographic items which included gender, education level, how much time participants spend watching sports games in a typical day, how often participants participate in sports activities in a month and how often participants purchase sporting goods in a month. Next to the descriptive statistics, the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and the Hotelling T2 Test were applied to determine the significant difference in attitudes toward advertising through sport among the demographics groups. By analyzing the attitudes toward advertising through sport among various demographics groups, it can be concluded that participants are divided in their attitudes regarding the question of how often they purchase sporting goods in a month.*

Key words: *Promotion, Middle East Technical University, Ankara.*

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INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a communication tool which is used by marketers to persuade prospective buyers to purchase a certain product or service. It plays a very important role in achieving the financial and commercial objectives of the companies concerned. The role of advertising is also very important in the modern competitive environment. The challenges of the age demand a bit more of the marketers in terms of informing, educating and facilitating the customer as to how to have timely access to a certain product or a service in an innovative way. The marketers are therefore devising ways to make advertising more effective. The attitude towards advertising is an important concept as it is one of the determinants of the attitude towards specific advertisements (Lutz, 1985) and can influence the way a consumer will respond to any particular advertising (Mehta, 2000). Since Zano's report of a negative trend in public opinion about advertising during the 1960s and 1970s (Zano, 1984), some studies have shown that the public's attitude towards advertising has been declining over time (Muehling, 1987; Andrews, 1989), while others have shown a more favorable evaluation of advertising (Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998).

This study aimed at investigating the consequences and impact that advertising through sport has on the attitudes of university stakeholders at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara. The growth of the sport industry, which has resulted in an increase in advertising through sport over the last several decades, is an indication that corporations have acknowledged the potential of advertising to accomplish a range of goals and objectives through sport. As this topic has become so important, Broughton, Lee, & Nethery (1999) reported that companies and organizations paid out approximately 45 billion dollars during 1999 for sport promotions in the United States (it was 21% of the estimated 213 billion dollars spent that year on the sport industry). The majority of sport promotion dollars comes from advertising. According to Irwin, Sutton, & McCarthy (2002), of the 45 billion dollars spent for sport promotions, approximately 29.5 billion dollars went to advertising through sport. Advertising through sport has become an important medium for many companies because of more flexibility, a broader reach, and higher levels of brands that the sport platforms afford (Kropp, Lavack, Holden, & Dalakas, 1999). When attending amateur or professional sporting events, or watching them, people are exposed to a variety of advertising forms. Unlike other advertising mediums such as television commercials or internet advertising, people involuntarily receive these advertisements because they watch the game for the sporting action rather than the advertisements. Some research has showed us (Shimp, 1981; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Brown & Stayman, 1992) that people form their attitudes based on advertising through sport, which influences their decisions to purchase a particular advertiser's product. As the spending on advertising through sport as part of corporate marketing strategies has continued to increase, a growing need for research has emerged. The effectiveness of some formats of advertising through sport such as in-stadium or outdoor signage, and sponsorship recall and recognition have been examined (Stotlar & Johnson, 1989; Cuneen & Hannan, 1993; Turco, 1996; Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Shilbury & Berriman, 1996; Pope & Voges, 1997, 2000; Harshaw & Turner, 1999; Nicholls, Roslow, & Dubliss, 1999; Turley & Shannon, 2000).

METHOD

The following section explains the materials and methods used in this study. The population and sample, instrument, and data analysis are presented in this order.

The population of the current study consists of stakeholders attending METU in Ankara. The sample of participants was selected from available classes during the spring semester in 2010 and the researchers contacted each instructor before the beginning of the classes. After receiving the instructor's approval, the questionnaires were distributed to the students just before each class. Questionnaires were administered to a total of 174 participants, but one questionnaire was excluded from the data pool because it was not filled out completely.

According to Pyun (2006), the questionnaire was composed of three sections: 1) attitude items, 2) belief items, and 3) demographic items. The system of variables consisted of 45 items, modeled by a seven-point Likert scale, regarding attitudes and beliefs (each paragraph contains seven verbal categories selected from strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7), one exception was a question in the global attitude section which used the anchors strongly dislike (1) and strongly like (7)), and six demographic items which included: gender (Male and Female), university status (Undergraduate, Master, Doctorate, Post-doctorate, Academic staff and Non-academic staff), how much time the participants spend watching sports games on a typical day (never, 1-30 minutes, 31-60 minutes, 61-90 minutes, 91-120 minutes and more than 120 minutes), how often the participants participate in sports activities in a month (never, less than once a month, 1-4 times a month, 5-10 times a month, 11-20 times a month and more than 20 times a month) and how often the participants purchase sporting goods in a month (never, less than once a month, 1-3 times a month, 4-6 times a month, 7-9 times a month and 10 times or more). The survey lasted approximately ten minutes and participation in this survey was on a voluntary base. The questionnaire was anonymous, and all the responses were kept strictly confidential. The participants did have the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without consequence.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). First of all, it was necessary to transform the variables corresponding to processes on a higher-order scale because all the variables were presented on nonparametric scales. The transformation was carried out using Blom's procedure. In addition to descriptive statistics, the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and the Hotelling T^2 test were used to determine significant differences in the attitudes toward advertising through sport among various demographic groups.

RESULTS

Tables 1 to 5 show us the information about the number of the sample size. Tables have been made for all the demographic groups which treat all sub-samples and their frequency, percents and cumulative percents, as well as the multivariate difference in the attitudes toward advertising through sport.

Table 1 The data based on gender

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	75	43.4	43.4
Female	98	56.6	100.0
Total	173	100.0	

$F=0.711$; $p=0.905$

After the data transformation using Blom's formula, the multivariate difference was calculated. Table 1 shows the multivariate difference of the attitudes toward advertising through sport based on gender. The table has been designed for this demographic group treating all 45 attitudes and beliefs. A significant difference at the $p=.905$ level was not found.

Table 2 The data based on university status

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undergraduate	131	75.7	75.7
Master	11	6.4	82.1
Doctorate	16	9.2	91.3
Post-doctorate	0	0.0	91.3
Academic Staff	7	4.0	95.4
Non-academic Staff	8	4.6	100.0
Total	173	100.0	

$F=0.807$; $p=0.954$

Table 2 shows the multivariate significant difference of attitudes toward advertising through sport among the university students. The table made for this demographic group presents all 45 attitudes and beliefs, but no significant difference at the $p=.954$ level was found.

Table 3 The data regarding the question of how much time participants spend watching sports games on a typical day

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	37	21.4	21.4
1-30 minutes	89	51.4	72.8
31-60 minutes	29	16.8	89.6
61-90 minutes	6	3.5	93.1
91-120 minutes	7	4.0	97.1
More than 120 minutes	5	2.9	100.0
Total	173	100.0	

$F=1.043$; $p=0.346$

Table 3 shows the multivariate significant difference of attitudes toward advertising through sport in relation to the question: how much time do the participants spend watching sports games on a typical day? The table made for this demographic group presents all 45 attitudes and beliefs and significant, but no difference at the $p=.346$ level was found.

Table 4 The data regarding the question how often participants take part in sports activities in a month

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	9	5.2	5.2
Less than once a month	27	15.6	20.8
1-4 times a month	41	23.7	44.5
5-10 times a month	47	27.2	71.7
11-20 times a month	29	16.8	88.4
More than 20 times a month	20	11.6	100.0
Total	173	100.0	

$F=0.960$; $p=0.638$

Table 4 shows the multivariate significant difference in the attitudes toward advertising through sport regarding the question: how often do the participants participate in sports activities in a month? The table made for this demographic group presented all 45 attitudes and beliefs, but no significant difference at the $p=.638$ level was found.

Table 5 The data regarding the question how often participants purchase sporting goods in a month

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	12	6.9	6.9
Less than once a month	96	55.5	62.4
1-3 times a month	50	28.9	91.3
4-6 times a month	12	6.9	98.3
7-9 times a month	2	1.2	99.4
10 times or more	1	0.6	100.0
Total	173	100.0	

$F=1.338$; $p=0.003$

Table 5 shows the multivariate significant difference of attitudes toward advertising through sport regarding the question: how often do the participants purchase sporting goods in a month? The table made for this demographic group presented all 45 attitudes and beliefs, and a significant difference at the $p=.003$ level can clearly be seen.

Since the multivariate significant difference among the groups cannot reveal between which groups the difference exists and how big they are, the Hotelling T^2 test was carried out as a follow-up statistical procedure. Table 6 shows the difference between the pairs of

this demographic group. By analyzing this table it can be seen that the differences are significant between the people who purchase sporting goods less than once a month and people who purchase sporting goods from 1 to 3 times a month as well as between people who purchase sporting goods from 1 to 3 times a month and people who purchase sporting goods from 7 to 8 times a month, whereas no significant difference between the other pairs was determined. One might expect to find significant differences especially between the pairs of PUL1-PU46, PUL1-PU79, and PUL1-PUM10 but because of the unbalanced sample size we could not find any significant difference between these pairs.

Table 6 Multivariate significant difference of attitudes toward advertising through sport between the pairs regarding the question how often participants purchase sporting goods in a month

vs.	PUL1	PU13	PU46	PU79	PUM10
PUN	1.487	1.634	1.198	1.308	3.742
PUL1		1.555 ^b	0.901	1.242	1.501
PU13			1.140	8.270 ^a	1,978
PU46				2.197	1,310
PU79					0.005

^a – significance $\leq .01$; ^b - significance $\leq .05$

Legend:

PUN – Never;

PUL1 – Less than once a month;

PU13 – 1-3 times a month;

PU46 – 4-6 times a month;

PU79 – 7-9 times a month;

PUM10 – 10 times or more.

As it can be seen from the descriptive parameters, more than 80% of the sample size belong to the people who purchase sporting goods less than once a month (N=96) and people who purchase sporting goods 1 to 3 times (N=50), and just 1.2% to the people who purchase sporting goods 7 to 8 times a month (N=2). Therefore, it should be emphasized that prospective users of this data should be focused on the first two groups and the significant differences between them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this investigation provides baseline data for further research on consumer responses to advertising through sport. Advertising through sport is a relatively new technology, especially when we talk about TV commercials and virtual advertising through global networks; we are witnesses of huge development nowadays. Today, advertising through sport has become an important medium for many companies because of more “flexibility, broader reach, and higher levels of brand or corporate exposure” that sport platforms afford (Kropp et al., 1999). According to this fact it is very important to investigate what is the most suitable way to find the best approach to various demographic groups.

By analyzing the attitudes toward advertising through sport among demographic groups in this study, it can be concluded that the participants are divided in their attitudes to the question: how often do they purchase sporting goods in a month? As it was found that the differences are significant between people who purchase sporting goods less than once a month and people who purchase sporting goods from 1 to 3 times a month as well as between people who purchase sporting goods from 1 to 3 times a month and people who purchase sporting goods from 7 to 9 times a month, it can be concluded that the differences are on the side of the people who purchase sporting goods from 1 to 5 times a month. This means that it should be strategically targeted, and some special approach to this group of customers should be invented. It was also determined that the differences are not significant between the items in all the other demographic groups, which can also be useful information for the companies during their advertising campaign. A better understanding of these findings will enable advertisers to establish more effective promotional strategies that should increase revenues and enhance the image of products or companies. That is the reason why this investigation provides the baseline data for further research on consumer responses to advertising through sport.

Many companies have utilized sports content to advertise their products or brands. Moreover, nowadays it is not difficult to see advertisements including sport themes via a variety of mediums such as television, magazines, or newspapers, as well as people who are exposed to various types of advertisements around a stadium, such as signage or logos on athletes' uniforms during sporting events. According to this fact, the advertisers must explore a certain perception or belief of their customers about the advertisement because people may have certain feelings or emotions toward the advertisement and it is based on their feelings or emotions that they make a decision at some point as to whether they will purchase the advertised product or not. Previous research has demonstrated that people form attitudes toward products and brands based on advertising (Shimp, 1981; MacKenzie et al. 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Brown & Stayman, 1992). In the same manner, it has been proposed that people form attitudes based on advertising through sport that influences decisions to purchase a particular advertiser's product. A comprehensive recognition of the relationships between the beliefs and attitudes in advertising is expected to have significant implications for advertising researchers and organizations that deal with advertising through sport. In terms of previous research, despite the growth of advertising through sport, academic research in this area to date is still limited. However, understanding customers' beliefs and attitude concepts surrounding advertising through sport will provide researchers with a comprehensive conceptual framework to identify key belief dimensions that influence attitudes toward advertising through sport, and subsequently purchase intentions and behaviors.

This study will also benefit organizations that deal with advertising through sport because advertising efforts will be more successful if advertisers are able to better understand the needs of their customers and their demographic characteristics, as well as what beliefs influence customers attitudes because images and messages may be crafted, which are consistent with positive beliefs, and to avoid activating negative beliefs. Considering that one goal of advertising is to persuade consumers to purchase a product, advertisers should recognize what, how and why target consumers believe and feel about their advertisements. As consumers, people form attitudes toward advertising that influence their decisions to purchase a particular advertiser's product. Thus, a better understanding of belief dimensions of customers will enable advertisers to establish more effective promo-

tional strategies that should increase revenues and enhance the image of their products or companies, and select a specific advertising medium and design an advertisement that effectively appeals to the target market.

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STAVOVI RAZLIČITIH DEMOGRAFSKIH GRUPA PREMA REKLAMIRANJU U SPORTU NA METU

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Ova studija ima za cilj da istraži posljedice i uticaj koji reklamiranje u sport ima na stavove interesnih grupa na METU u Ankari. Podaci su prikupljeni na uzorku od 173 slučajno odabranih učesnika. Prema Pyun-u (2006) upitnik je bio sastavljen od 45 stavova i uvjerenja i 6 demografskih podataka u odnosu na pol, nivo obrazovanja, te koliko ispitanici vremena provode gledajući sportske igre tokom tipičnog dana, zatim koliko često učestvuju u sportskim aktivnostima tokom mjeseca i koliko često kupuju sportske proizvode tokom mjeseca. Pored deskriptivne statistike, primenjeni su multivarijatna analiza varijanse (MANOVA) i Hotelling-ov T^2 test za određivanje značajnosti razlika u stavovima prema reklamiranju u sportu između demografskih grupa. Analizom stavova prema reklamiranju u sportu među demografskim grupama može se zaključiti da su učesnici ankete podijeljeni u stavovima kada je u pitanju učestalost kupovine sportskih proizvoda tokom mjesec dana.

Ključne reči: *Promocija, Middle East Technical University, Ankara.*